

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN OYO STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By

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Introduction

Survey around the world on the reading ability of children shows that one of the factors that positively influence children's reading achievement is the accessibility of books in their immediate environment; at home, in the classroom and in the school library.

Children introduced to books at an early stage go on to be more confident readers when they grow up. Children who read well often acquire the ability to shift information, they also tend to be more flexible in their approach to issues and, above all, are logical in their conclusions.

The Oyo State Government's commitment to the emplacement of an egalitarian society is underscored by its programmes, which are designed to produce an enlightened citizenry, eradicate poverty, superstition and ignorance. The provision of Free, Universal Qualitative Education for the people of the state is therefore an avenue aimed at ensuring an egalitarian society.

Government is desirous of using library services for lifting the literacy levels, re-awakening learning and rejuvenating the education sector. Time was when Local Government Councils rendered library services. Our people go to the libraries to read newspapers, borrow books and obtain information.

Remember the era of the radiovision and Library View Centres! The children were not left out. No wonder people now reminisce of year gone-by. The present administration in Oyo State takes a holistic approach to its literacy reawakening programme. The Government has reactivated the State Library Board at Ibadan and opened new libraries in Oyo, Ogbomosho and Saki. The State Library Board has acquired additional titles, computers and received gifts of various titles from Books -Aid International and other Library Boards outside the country. Futhermore, the State Government has released substantial

grants to the Board to enable it meet the aspiration of the people in providing efficient Library Services.

The Oyo State Government shares the view that library development is an essential ingredient for attaining quality education. The fact on ground, however, shows that 95% of our pupils come to school from illiterate or semi-literate background. Many of these children may never have read a book before they entered school. It therefore behooves government to equip these children with adequate library facilities to promote and enhance the learning process. This is amplified in the National Policy on Education (1981) where the Government states, *inter alia* that it will:

“provide junior libraries for primary school children, ensure that all schools are properly equipped to promote sound and effective teaching and in particular that suitable textbooks and libraries are provided for schools”.

As laudable as this policy is, its implementation in our schools has unfortunately been less than satisfactory. The Oyo State Government therefore mandated the State Primary Education Board to put in place necessary machinery to give effect to the dictates of the National Policy on Library Development, as it affects primary schools.

The Oyo State Primary Education Board's (OYO SPEB) Library Development Programme falls under phase II of its Blueprint on the “*Resuscitation of Primary Education in Oyo State*”. The components of the OYO SPEB Blueprint is hereby stated below:

PHASE I

Goal:- Creating Child- Friendly School

Activities

- * Massive rehabilitation of dilapidated infrastructures in our Primary Schools;
- * Provision of First Aid Boxes and Drugs to all Public Primary Schools in the State;
- * Provision of Toilet Facilities and Potable water to our Public Schools;
- * Development of Playground Facilities;
- * Fencing of Public Primary Schools; and
- * Restructuring of Handicapped Schools.

PHASE II

Goal: - Enhancing & Energizing the Curriculum & its Delivery

Activities

- * Establishment of OYO SPEB School Library Project (OYO SPEB-SLP);
- * Training of Teacher-Librarians and
- * Workshop for teacher on core-subject of English, Mathematics, Primary Science & Social Studies.

Phase III

Goal: - Development and Programme Science Schedule

Activities

- * Training teacher on the teaching of Science in Primary Schools;
 - * Establishment and Development of the Science Culture in Primary Schools
 - * Construction of Science Laboratories in all Public Primary Schools; and
 - * Development of Computer Literacy in Primary Schools
- The details of the **Library Development Programme** for the primary school subsector is presented in Figure I. The OYO SPEB Library Development Programme is made up of the following components:
- (i) **SPEB Headquarters Library** which serves as the Main Reference Library and Resource Centre is located at the OYO SPEB Headquarters Complex Building, Agodi, Ibadan. It is to cater for SPEB Staff, Teachers and the General Public and currently holds about 4,000 Volumes of Books, Journals and Magazines. A professional librarian heads the Headquarters Library.
 - (ii) **The School Library Project (OYO SPEB - SLP)** which is school based is made up of the School Library Resources Centres (SLRCs) and the School Mobile Library Services (SMLS). The overall objective of the School Library Project is to improve the reading habits of our pupils and make reading more pleasurable. This should form the basis of a life long project of using reading to acquire knowledge. We want to teach our children **“to learn to read so that they can read to learn”**. Our strategy for actualising an effective school library administration is as follows:

(a) Training of Teacher-Librarians and Library Assistants:

For the School Library to be of utmost benefit to our educational set-up, the Oyo State Primary Education Board decided to introduce the Teacher-Librarian cadre into its staff establishment. The Board in collaboration with the State Library Board and the Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan, trained Primary School Teachers with NCE qualification who had bias in Library Studies. In all, 256 Teachers had the initial training from which the best 33 of the lot undertook further training with the same institution. The 23 teachers are our first batch of Teacher-Librarians who would be responsible for the School Library Resource Centres. Meanwhile, Library Assistants have also been trained to work along with the Teacher-Librarians.

Moreover, Oyo State is proud to present these Teacher-Librarians for membership of the Nigerian School Library Association. I am also pleased to announce that the 33 Public Primary Schools where the School Library Resource Centres are located and indeed the OYO STATE PRIMARY EDUCATION BOARD itself are also to become institutional members. Members of the NSLA are close to the pupils and teachers of Oyo State Public Primary Schools. Herein lies the need for a strong partnership between Oyo SPEB and NSLA.

(b) Establishment of OYO SPEB School Library Resource Centres (SLRs).

The Oyo State Primary Education Board shares the view that a modern library should in addition to books store non-book materials such as audio-visual materials. Moreover, the library facilities must be child-centred. The Board has therefore designed the "OYO SPEB SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE" (OYO SPEB SLRCs) to incorporate reading areas, audio-visual room and work/preparatory room to ensure full utilization of the library facilities. The floor plan of a SLRC is shown in Figure 2.

The SLRC has been constructed in a school in each of the 33 Local Government Council Areas of Oyo State at a total cost of N60,776,266.99 (Sixty Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy Six Thousand, Two Hundred and Sixty-Six Naira, Ninety-Nine Kobo). In addition, furniture worth N7,997,300.00 (Seven Million, Nine Hundred and Ninety-Seven Thousand, Three Hundred Naira only) have been provided for the 33 SLRCs. Typical SLRCs are shown in Figure 3.

The OYO SPEB utilized N33 million of its year 2001 Education Tax Fund (ETF) grant to purchase textbooks, reference materials, charts and other non-book materials for the centers. Thus each SLRC is being provided with TV Set, a Generating Set, VCR Machine and Slide Projector. An additional N11,500,000.00 (Eleven Million, Five Hundred Thousand Naira Only) has been allocated to the Board by ETF for the Year 2002 intervention for the procurement of supplementary readers for the SLRCs.

OYO SPEB - School Mobile Library Services (OYO SPEB-SMLSs)

OYO SPEB is providing School Mobile Library Services (SMLSs) to compliment our efforts on the OYO SPEB SLRCs. A total number of 7 vans have been approved for the take-off of the Programme. Each of the vans is estimated to cost N1530,000.00 (One Million, Five Hundred and Thirty Thousand Naira Only). For administrative purposes, the State has been divided into 7 Mobile Library Zones with each zone assigned a Mobile Library Van to serve the schools in the area. Figure 4 is on Oyo SPEB Mobile Library Van.

(c) Community Library Committees (CLCs):

The empowerment of our people information wise is a necessary prerequisite to the successful implementation of government programmes. The OYO SPEB has therefore established a *Community Library Committee (CLC)* in each school where the *School Library Resource Centre (SLRC)* is located. A 7-member Committee comprising a Community Leader (as Chairman), PTA Chairman and Treasurer of the host school, a representative of the Women Group in the Local Government, the LGEA Secretary, Headmaster of the school and the Teacher-Librarian would be in charge of the affairs of the School Library Resource Centre. This way, the community would be responsible for the Centres and see same not as government properties but theirs.

At the last NSLA Annual Conference in Ibadan in Year 2001, your Communique touched on six issues-viz

- (i) the call on the Nigeria Governments and NGOs to support the creation of a data-base for Nigeria School Libraries,
- (ii) the need for increased investments on library provisions,
- (iii) implementation of National Policy on Education with the promotion of School Library Services and the employment of qualified teacher-librarians to plan and implement school library programmes,
- (iv) the need for the teacher/pupil to acquire library use skills

- (v) the effective presence of chapters of the NSLA; and
- (vi) the need for active involvement of professionally trained teacher-librarians in every process of selection and acquisition.

The Oyo State Government Library Development Programme for primary schools has no doubt been patterned along your Communique. This further proves my earlier assertion that OYO SPEB and NSLA share common aspiration towards making our schools “communities where literacy not only thrives but also empowers”.

Finally, I wish to commend, not only the foresight of the founding fathers and mothers but also to extol the courage, the sacrifices and the sustaining efforts of the past and present Executive Committee of the NSLA in the 25 years.

May the efforts of the NSLA, as a body, in fostering a sustainable reading environment for the Nigerian Child not be in vain. May reading become a pass time of all Nigerians!

Figure I
OYO STATE PRIMARY EDUCATION BOARD
OYO SPEB
LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Goal:	<i>Improving the Reading Culture of our people</i>
Phase 1:	SPEB HEADQUARTERS LIBRARY Main Reference Library & Resource Centre
Location:	Oyo SPEB Complex Building, Agodi, Ibadan
Book Types:	All Subjects Archive for Education Documents/Materials
Partronage:	SPEB Staff, Teachers & General Public
Management:	OYO SPEB Professional Librarians
Phase II:	SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRES (SLRCs)
Location:	Public Primary Schools in the State
Book Types:	Books for Pre-Primary & Primary Classes 1-6 Reference Materials Syllabus Books Text Books Instructional Materials Audio-Visual Materials

Patronage: Pupils & Teachers
Management: Teacher-Librarian & Community Library
Committee (CLC)
Phase III SCHOOL MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE (SMLS)
Location: Rural Public Primary Schools
Book Types: Books for Pre-Primary & Primary Classes 1-6
Provision of Book Boxes
Reference Materials
Syllabus Books
Text Books
Instructional Materials
Audio-Visual Materials
Patronage: Pupils and Teachers
Management: Teacher-Librarian & Community Library
Committee (CLC)

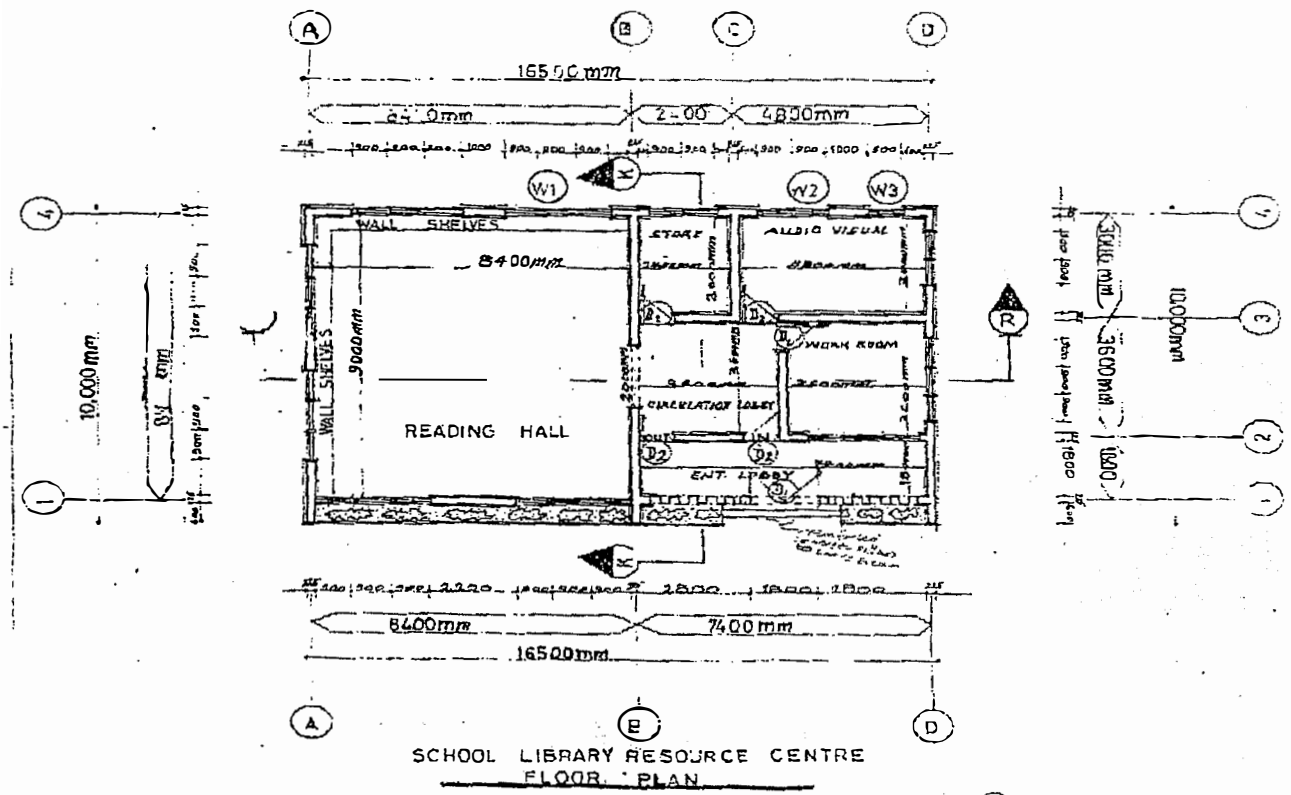


Fig. 2: School Library Resource Centre Floor.

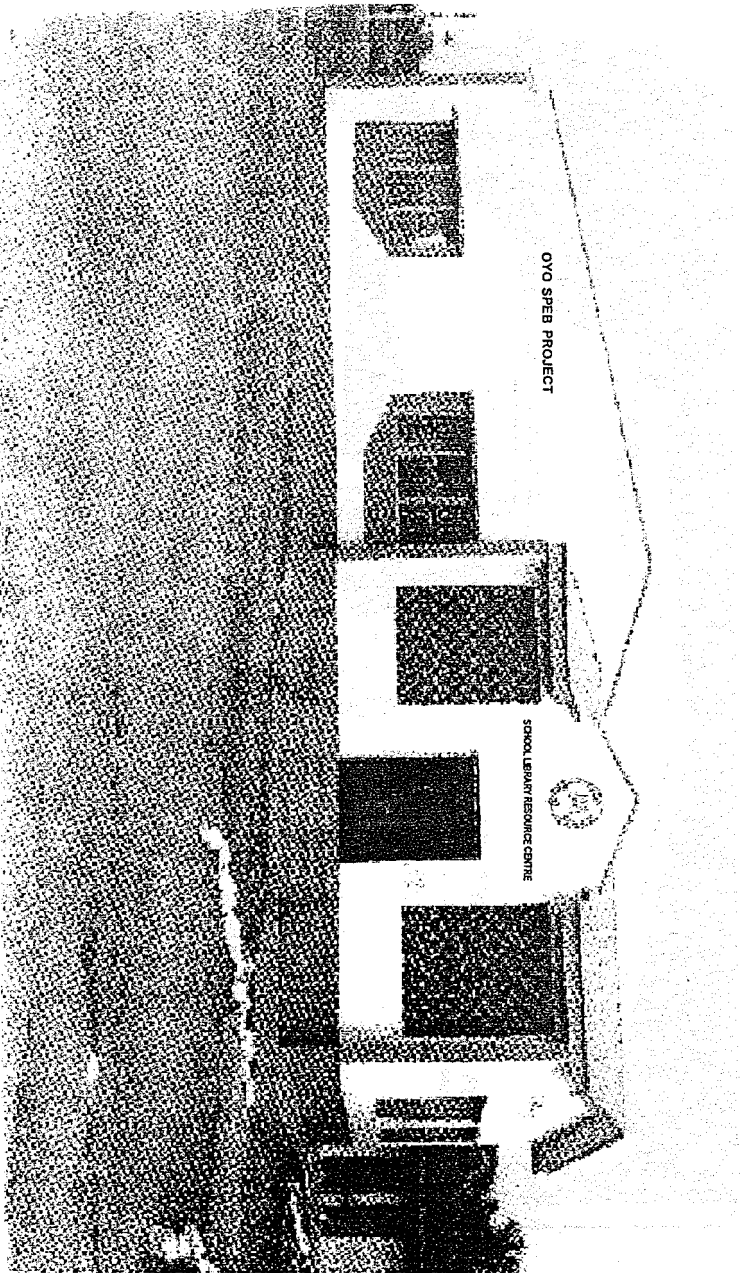


Fig. 3: School Library Resource Centre Building.

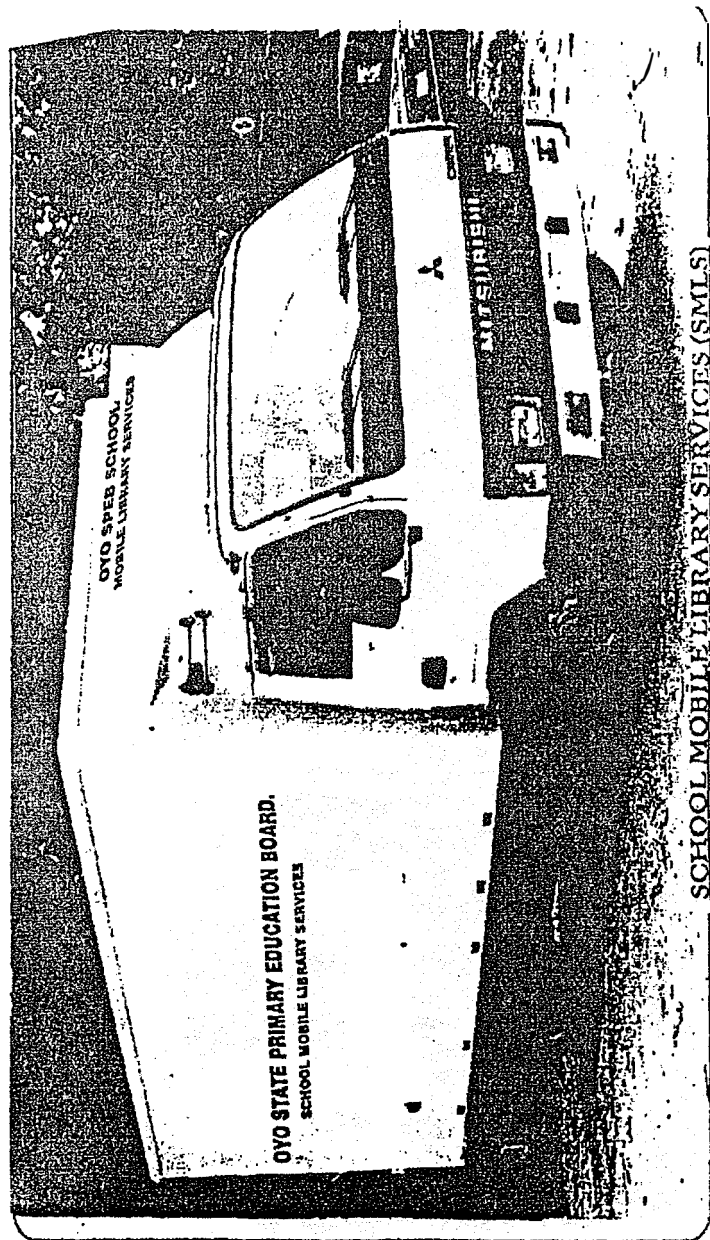


Fig. 4: Mobile Library.